



## Department of Geology and Geophysics

Lewis G. Weeks Hall for Geological Sciences  
1215 W. Dayton Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1692

<http://www.geology.wisc.edu>  
Phone: 608/262-8960 / Fax: 608/262-0693  
E-mail: [geodept@geology.wisc.edu](mailto:geodept@geology.wisc.edu)



Dear Alumni and Friends,

We are pleased to send to you the 2008 edition of the *Outcrop*. Our sincere thanks to Professor John Valley and Graphic Artist Mary Diman for assembling an informative, photo-filled overview of what GeoBadgers have been up to lately.

The cover story by Professor Brad Singer (pages 24-26) describes the research of Brad and Senior Research Scientist Ken Hoffman on the behavior of the Earth's magnetic dynamo. In their September 2008 paper in *Science*, they hypothesize a plate tectonic connection to magnetic field features that emerges when the field weakens. We hope you will also enjoy reading about several of the field trips taken in 2008 by students, faculty, and staff, as well as some reminiscences from Bob Dott about field trips of the past. The Student Field Experiences Fund (pages 3 and 42) provided support for all of these field trips and other student and museum field activities in 2008.

Two of our Weeks Hall colleagues retired in 2008, and a third announced her retirement effective the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. Charlie Byers (page 28) ended a 35-year career of teaching and research in sedimentary geology and paleontology. His teaching is legendary, and he made significant scholarly and service contributions, the latter at the department, university, and national levels. Lee Powell (page 17) retired at the end of 2008, after more than 40 years of creative instrumentation design and technical systems maintenance. Lee always got that special gleam in his eye when he discovered a way to solve a problem. Mary Anderson (page 29) announced her plan to retire in 2009. We look forward to taking the opportunity to celebrate her career later this year.

Not surprisingly, UW has been impacted by the global financial crisis, and the university is expecting to be hit with another significant round of budget cuts. Our new chancellor, Bidy Martin, is pursuing a number of avenues to help UW maintain its strength in these difficult times, including proposing the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates, which would institute a differential tuition level at UW (see <http://madisoninitiative.wisc.edu>). Despite the fiscal turmoil, our department is in the final stages of a faculty search to hire a sedimentary geologist. Alumni support is a key to our ability to maintain our faculty at full strength.

I want to extend my thanks to all of you who helped me make the transition to being department chair. I appreciate all the more how hard my predecessors worked to keep things running smoothly in Weeks Hall. I will do my best to keep the proverbial ball rolling.

Finally, I encourage you to keep us posted on your activities so we can continue to keep our alumni and friends informed of the exciting things GeoBadgers are doing. Thanks!

Best wishes,

Cliff Thurber  
Professor and Department Chair